

Wolverhampton Compact Update

Welcome to the latest Compact Update, where you can find out all the latest information about how the Compact is developing and changes that have happened in recent months.

The Compact sets out how the statutory, voluntary and community sectors can work better together and was established nationally in 1998.

Wolverhampton Compact is managed by a monitoring and implementation group (MAIG) which works closely with Wolverhampton Partnership. Their work is further supported by Compact Champions across the city. The priority is to achieve the best outcomes for communities which relies on creating, maintaining and strengthening our

partnerships, underpinned by Compact principles.

Included in this update is national news about the Compact including another award for Wolverhampton Compact and a new Commissioner for the Compact along with local initiatives such as 'So, what do you do then?' and the Champions Network. In addition, there is news on the latest Compact action plan and the work that Wolverhampton Compact is involved in to develop more Compact Codes of Practice.

To get in touch with the Compact about any of the issues that are raised in this update, contact the team—details can be found on the back page.



Third time award winners in Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton's Compact was rewarded with an Excellence Award at the 2008 Compact Awards.

This is the third year in a row that Wolverhampton Compact has picked up a national award with a Compact Commendation for Excellence being presented in 2006 and a gold award in the 'Way of Working' category being won in 2007. The latest accolade is an Excellence Award in the 'Local Compact of the Year' category and, although the team missed out on being named the overall winner, we were very proud to once again receive recognition for the hard work put in by colleagues.

Representatives from the council and the voluntary and community

sector travelled to the awards ceremony at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) headquarters in London. All finalists were also invited to an early evening reception at 11 Downing Street to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Compact.

The ceremony was hosted by Commissioner for the Compact, Sir Bert Massie CBE, who said, "The quality of entrants for this year's awards was extremely high and the judging panel was very impressed with the level of commitment to the Compact."

"All of our finalists demonstrate



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how the Compact can be a living document that influences action and encourages both sectors to work together to improve and enhance the services and support they offer to the public."

In addition, a national newsletter produced by the Commission for the Compact described Wolverhampton as, "A great place to find out how the Compact works in practice."

More details about successful Wolverhampton initiatives which helped them win the award include Compact Champions and an outcome-focused action plan, more details of which can be found inside this update.

Ready for action

Wolverhampton Compact's latest action plan has been revamped and revitalised through the adoption of an 'outcomes approach' to planning.



The new plan identifies that although there is a single, overall aim to bring about a long-term change by implementing the Compact, specific tasks have been identified to achieve that aim and outcomes for each of these have been outlined.

In the short term, the Compact will be working towards increased understanding and awareness of Compact principles with more organisations signing up to the Compact. The use of the Codes of Practice will also be encouraged. Publicity will ensure that the Codes are brought to the attention of those that need them and work with specific groups will be carried out to ensure that the Codes are kept up to date. A greater number of joint events where the statutory and voluntary and community sector work together will also be organised to help both parties work better together.

In the medium term, activities will centre around building trust and respect between partners and will include activities such as increased

levels of partnership working and more participation for the voluntary and community sector in statutory sector meetings and forums including Neighbourhood Partnerships. Another aim is to increase the role of the third sector with a greater percentage of service provision from the third sector and more involvement of the sector in statutory sector governance boards. Other activities under this aim include a growth in advocacy and a greater take up of support from third sector infrastructure organisations. Finally, Wolverhampton Compact aims to enable sectors to challenge each other within the Compact framework with a greater use of the Codes of Practice and mechanisms such as advocacy in order to resolve disputes between organisations.



For more details of the Compact action plan, visit the Compact website at www.wolverhampton-compact.org.uk.



Key Compact appointments

In the past year, we have seen two key appointments to National Compact positions.

Sir Bert Massie CBE was appointed as the new Commissioner to the Compact in March 2008. The Commission is an independent organisation which aims to promote effective partnership working between the public sector and the third sector through the application of the Compact and its five codes of practice.

In previous roles, Sir Bert has been the Chair of the Disability Rights Commission and Chief Executive of the disability charity, Radar. He brings a wealth of experience to the role as an international expert in equality and social policy, having worked in the voluntary sector for 40 years.

More recently, in October 2008, Sir Kevin Brennan MP was appointed Minister for the Third Sector based at the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) which is part of the Cabinet Office. The role of the OTS is to provide financial and political support to the Commission for the Compact, the Commissioner and Compact Voice, whilst respecting their independence. Key to all of this is the lead the OTS takes in the work across Government to support a "thriving third sector."

So, what do you do then?

Have you ever thought about what working life is like for a colleague from another organisation? Well now's your chance to find out as staff are being given the unique opportunity to pair up with someone from a different sector and try out a work place 'swap.'

Staff can spend a day at another place of work shadowing a colleague's role - and vice versa - to discover what life is like in each other's shoes.

This ongoing initiative entitled 'So what do you do then?' was launched in National Compact week (Nov 2008) and offers a real opportunity to get an insight into what happens in another organisation. This can be particularly useful if you work with or have knowledge of the organisation and want to understand why things are

done differently to your place of work. At the same time it can help you to understand the context that you are currently working within.

Amongst the first partners to take part in the scheme were Compact Administrator, Kath Pye, who paired up with Jo Reynolds from the Community Initiatives team at the council.

Both found the shadowing experience useful as they gained a greater understanding of what the other organisation did as well as being reminded of the range of activities that

Compact Administrator, Kath Pye & Safer, Stronger Communities Officer, Jo Reynolds who took part in 'So, what do you do then?'



their own organisation was involved in. Jo found that the voluntary sector was able to be very responsive to local needs whilst Kath discovered that the council were not just there to give out funding but offered much more help to local groups.

Participants can sign up to shadow someone at any time providing they work in a different sector. To take part in the initiative, obtain the consent of your line manager and contact the Compact team for more details.

We are the Champions!

A new network has been established to bring Compact Champions from organisations across the city together to share their experiences and learn more about how to implement the Compact.

Compact officers realised that, in order to make Compact Champions more effective, they required additional support and information about how the Compact could be put into practice. The first step was to bring together Champions from a variety of organisations and give them the chance to share their experiences with others and give feedback about how to increase the Champions role.

Workshops during the day-long event enabled the Champions



to think about how they could introduce the Compact succinctly to their colleagues and how to deal with those who doubted its effectiveness. The difficulty of being able to sum up what the Compact does in a few words became apparent and Champions were encouraged to spread the word by using examples of when Compact principles had been used successfully.

Most of those attending the event indicated that they would

be making an effort to find out more about the Compact and many said that they would speak to colleagues, trustees and board members to help them understand the importance of the Compact. Delegates also indicated that they would examine their own organisation's policies to ensure that they were 'Compact Compliant.' Many also said that they would look to implement Compact principles when working in partnership to ensure that both partners understand exactly what is expected of them and can develop joint action plans.

Following the initial event, Compact Champions now meet on a regular basis. To find out more about becoming a Compact Champion, contact the Compact team.



**Wolverhampton
Compact**

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Compact debate looks to the future

In this, the 10th year of the Compact, the Commission for the Compact conducted a debate to explore, amongst other things, whether greater legal power for the Compact or greater statutory powers for the Commissioner would serve to improve implementation.

The debate was triggered by calls from third sector organisations for the Compact to be given 'more teeth'. These calls stem from frustration that the Compact is not used as widely or as meaningfully as it might be.

Sir Bert Massie CBE, Commissioner for the Compact, said, "I'm delighted that the Compact Debate has generated responses from the statutory, public and voluntary and community sectors, together representing and advocating the views of over 60,000 regional and local third sector groups from across the country.

Around 500 voluntary organisations, public bodies and partnerships contributed their views in the debate, with our online questionnaire drawing 111 responses and the Commission, 78. The majority of our returns support

extending the Compact to all civil society organisations. Results on other key questions include:

- More than 80% want an expectation set in a revised Compact for effective local disputes procedures that would link with national **mediation / arbitration**.
- Over 85% back Local Compacts being expected to adopt national Compact **key commitments** and detail on funding, commissioning, consultation and volunteering.
- 90% agree with setting an expectation for councils to consider what **resources** they need to allocate to implementation.

Look for us online

Wolverhampton Compact is in the process of launching a brand new website to provide the latest information about what the Compact is doing in the city.

The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with links for Home, Compact Champions, Our Values, Sign Up, Conflict and Resolution, Codes of Practice, Annual Report, Compact Document, News, Contact Us, and Links. The main content area features a 'Welcome to Wolverhampton Compact' section with a sub-heading 'About Wolverhampton Compact' and a paragraph describing the Compact's development and goals. There are also several small circular images and a larger photo of a meeting.

The website contains details of Compact Codes of Practice, the latest action plan and information about Compact Champions and you can also sign up to the Compact online.

Visit

www.wolverhampton-compact.co.uk

to find out more.